

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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P 302239Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4183
INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: JJSS ELECTION ANNULLED

1. THE CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL HANDED DOWN A DECISION
JUNE 29 ANNULING THE MARCH ELECTION OF JEAN-JACQUES
SERVAN-SCHREIBER TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FROM NANCY.
TWO FACTS JUSTIFIED THE DECISION. ON THE NIGHT BEFORE
THE FINAL VOTE, PRO-JJSS TRACTS WERE PASSED OUT SHOWING
GEORGES MARCHAIS, DISGUISED AS A MONSTER, HOLDING IN
HIS MOUTH THE SYMBOL OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY (JJSS'
OPPONENT IN THE FINAL ROUND WAS SOCIALIST CANDIDATE
TONDON). THE TRACT CARRIED THE COMMENT "VOTING TONDON
IS TO VOTE MARCHAIS." DISTRIBUTION OF THE TRACT THE
NIGHT PRIOR TO THE VOTE VIOLATED ELECTORAL LAWS. SECOND,
UPON RECOUNTING THE VOTES, THE COUNCIL DETERMINED THAT
JJSS HAD ONLY WON BY 4 VOTES (NOT 22 AS PREVIOUSLY RE-
PORTED) AND THEREFORE THE ILLEGAL TRACT COULD HAVE IN-
FLUENCED THE ELECTION RESULTS. JJSS HAS SAID THAT HE
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WILL RUN IN THE CORRECTIVE ELECTION WHICH MUST BE HELD
WITHIN THREE MONTHS. COMMENTING ON THE COUNCIL'S FIND-
ING, HE SAID THAT IT WAS A POLITICAL DECISION AND
THERE WOULD BE A POLITICAL RESPONSE. "THE VOTERS OF
LORRAINE WILL BE THE SOVEREIGN JUDGES. ALL COMMENTARY
WILL THEN BE SUPERFLUOUS."

2. JJSS SECOND ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN MAY WELL BE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT THAN THE FIRST. HE IS GENUINELY DISLIKED BY THE GAULLISTS, WHO, DUE TO THE THREAT FROM THE LEFT, RESTRAINED THEIR CAMPAIGNING AGAINST HIM IN THE FIRST ROUND LAST MARCH AND SUPPORTED HIM IN THE SECOND. GIVEN THE PRESENT OVERWHELMING MAJORITY POSITION IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, IF JJSS SHOULD DEFEAT THE GAULLIST CANDIDATE ON THE FIRST ROUND, THE GAULLISTS MAY WELL DECIDE THE MAJORITY CAN AFFORD TO LOSE THE SEAT AND ONLY HALF HEARTEDLY SUPPORT JJSS IN THE FINAL ROUND. THE SOCIALIST CANDIDATE TONDON LED JJSS ON THE FIRST ROUND OF VOTING LAST MARCH, AND JJSS OWES HIS VICTORY (?) TO THE RPR.

3. JJSS HAS TWO THINGS GOING FOR HIM, HOWEVER. FIRST, THERE IS A TENDENCY FOR DEPUTIES TO BE REELECTED IN CONTESTED ELECTIONS OF THIS TYPE UNLESS THE ELECTORATE PERCEIVES A GENUINELY SUFFICIENT CAUSE TO REFUSE THE SEAT. SECOND, JJSS MADE A SEVERE GAFFE (AN ALLEGEDLY RACIST COMMENT) JUST PRIOR TO THE MARCH ELECTIONS WHICH MAY HAVE WELL COST HIM SOME VOTES, BUT WHICH WILL BE LESS IN THE PUBLIC'S MIND NOW.

4. IN ANY EVENT, THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTION WILL PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN DETERMINING JJSS' FUTURE. AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE RADICAL SOCIALISTS, HE ALREADY FACES SIGNIFICANT BUT LATENT INTERNAL OPPOSITION. AN ELECTORAL DECISION DENYING HIM A SEAT IN THE ASSEMBLY COULD BE THE FINAL STRAW. SECOND, JJSS IS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED (IN THE PUBLIC'S MIND) WITH GISCARD, AND WAS ONE OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF THE UDF. A DEFEAT IN THE CORRECTIVE ELECTION WOULD BE AN EMBARRASSMENT TO BOTH WITH POLITICAL EFFECTS EXTENDING BEYOND THE BORDERS OF THE VOTING DISTRICT IN NANCY. IT WILL BE A HOTLY CONTESTED ELECTION WITH JJSS' PROBABLE OPPONENTS (GAULLIST, PS, PC) ATTEMPTING TO EXPLOIT IT FOR NATIONAL POLITICAL AIMS.

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